



Annual Programme Report 2024

Human Rights Center “Glotion”

Reporting period: January to December 2024

Overview

In 2024, Glotion combined international advocacy, legal action and community education to advance human rights in Kazakhstan. Our work connected the concerns of LGBTQIA+ people with diplomatic engagement and international human rights mechanisms. We also contributed to work on privacy and access to remedies for personal data violations.

Glotion is a non-profit, non-governmental organisation registered on 28 May 2021. Our mission is to advance human rights and freedoms through education, human rights monitoring, assessment and information, and the protection of public interests.

Advocacy through the Universal Periodic Review

Glotion co-authored an alternative report for Kazakhstan’s Universal Periodic Review (UPR). During the advocacy week and UPR pre-sessions in Geneva, we promoted recommendations addressing the rights of LGBTQIA+ people and engaged with diplomatic representatives to bring community concerns into the review process.

The work continued beyond the reporting year. At the subsequent review, Kazakhstan received 21 recommendations specifically addressing sexual orientation and gender identity. This was a collective advocacy result to which Glotion contributed. It is recorded here as a subsequent outcome of the 2024 advocacy, rather than as a recommendation issued or implemented in 2024.

Warsaw Human Dimension Conference

At WHDC 2024, Glotion conducted advocacy on the human rights situation of LGBTQIA+ people in Kazakhstan. We organised a side event, prepared three statements for plenary sessions and held more than ten advocacy meetings. These activities brought community concerns to international stakeholders and provided opportunities to discuss specific recommendations and possible follow-up.

Community participation and legal action

Queer Rights Talks

We held six Queer Rights Talks involving more than 100 people. Topics included the outcome of the petition seeking restrictions on LGBTQIA+ information, the right to health and responses to rights violations, and current questions relating to military service. The discussions provided opportunities to ask practical questions, exchange experiences and consider available means of protecting rights.

Coming Out Day 2024

Glotion organised a Coming Out Day event to promote proposed UPR recommendations and facilitate dialogue between the community and diplomatic representatives. The event brought together 30 diplomats and 20 community members, connecting community priorities with international advocacy.

Queer Rights Week

To mark Human Rights Day, we organised Queer Rights Week. The programme included discussions of the community's psychological well-being and human rights training. It brought rights education and community support into a shared programme of activities.

Challenging discriminatory initiatives

Glotion implemented a project from November to December 2024 that combined legal action, public discussion and advocacy training. Rustam Zhantassov and Alisher Kozhagulov formed the legal team challenging the Ministry of Culture and Information's decision following consideration of the anti-LGBT petition.

The court rejected the challenge. Nevertheless, the proceedings enabled the team to obtain an official response from the Ministry explaining further government work related to the petition. This information supported subsequent advocacy planning. The case is therefore reported as a legal intervention that generated useful information, not as a court victory.

Glotion held two public discussions in Astana, on 7 and 21 December, and developed an advocacy learning module. A training held on 7 December involved 16 participants, including people from Shymkent, Kokshetau and Karaganda. Participants practised designing advocacy campaigns. Human rights expert Tatyana Chernobyl was engaged to document the advocacy experience, alongside contributions from Alisher Kozhagulov, Rustam Zhantassov and Arsen Aubakirov to the training.

Attendance figures refer to individual activities. They are not added together as a total number of unique beneficiaries because participation may overlap, including across the December programme.

Privacy rights and learning

Privacy Unlocked

Under Privacy Unlocked: Streamlining through Debureaucratization, Glotion worked with Human Rights Consulting Group and privacy expert Dana Buralkiyeva. This report covers only the activities scheduled within the first three project months, whose completion has been confirmed by Glotion.

The completed work included a review of the legal framework governing complaints about personal data processing and collection and analysis of information on complaints, processing times and outcomes. Stakeholder interviews explored practical difficulties faced by citizens, data operators and the relevant authority.

The team also reviewed the documentation and interface of the personal data access-control service, carried out surveys and focus groups with users, and compared international approaches to personal data access control. This work developed an evidence base for identifying administrative barriers and preparing recommendations for Kazakhstan.

Partnerships and capacity

Glotion combined legal expertise, community engagement and advocacy in cooperation with other human rights defenders. The December training connected participants from several cities, while international advocacy created opportunities to communicate community concerns to diplomatic and human rights stakeholders. Privacy Unlocked brought together legal, advocacy and technical expertise.

Challenges and lessons

The two-month implementation period of the November-December project limited the time available for deeper follow-up and sustained regional engagement. The unsuccessful court challenge also demonstrated the limitations of litigation as a stand-alone route to change. Combining legal proceedings with documentation, community discussion and international advocacy helped the team make use of the information obtained.

The year's experience highlighted the importance of sustained relationships, realistic implementation periods and follow-up after training and advocacy meetings. Future work should connect community concerns, legal evidence and policy proposals while tracking whether institutional responses lead to practical improvements.

Reporting basis

This retrospective programme report draws on Glotion's activity information, the final project narrative report for contract No. 147-2024, and the Privacy Unlocked work plan together with Glotion's confirmation of completed first-three-month activities. It is a narrative account of programme work, not an audited financial statement.



Annual Programme Report 2025

Human Rights Center “Glotion”

Reporting period: January to December 2025

Overview

In 2025, Glotion combined individual legal assistance, strategic litigation, community education and advocacy to protect human rights in Kazakhstan. We responded to police raids affecting LGBTQIA+ venues, challenged restrictions on civic participation and LGBTQIA+ information, and strengthened our organisational systems. Strategic planning resulted in a new organisational strategy for 2025-2028.

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Legal assistance and police accountability

Glotion provided 95 legal consultations during the year. Alongside individual advice, we pursued strategic cases addressing practices affecting the wider LGBTQIA+ community.

Following a police raid on LGBTQIA+ venues in Astana, we documented incidents and supported a collective administrative case brought by seven people against the Saryarka District Police Department. The claimants won the case in 2025. This provided a concrete example of using legal remedies to challenge police conduct.

We also supported a related case concerning alleged fraud by a police officer. During 2025, criminal proceedings were initiated, the officer was placed in pre-trial detention and dismissed from the police. These were investigative and employment outcomes; they are not presented as a criminal conviction.

According to Glotion’s follow-up, no further raids on LGBTQIA+ venues in Astana were reported following these interventions during the reporting period. We complemented casework with two safety trainings for LGBTQIA+ clubs in Astana and Almaty.

Freedom of assembly and gender recognition

Glotion supported trans activist Yara Tychina in connection with a 2025 picket opposing restrictions on LGBTQIA+ information. Our assistance sought to protect her dignity and procedural rights. The sanction was decided in 2026 and is reported separately as a subsequent development.

We also supported trans people in cases concerning legal gender recognition and launched strategic litigation to defend LGBTQIA+ people’s freedom of association in response to barriers to registering a community organisation.

Advocacy and international engagement

Responding to restrictive legislation

From 30 July 2025, Glotion pursued a coordinated response to proposed restrictions on so-called “LGBT propaganda”. We monitored and analysed amendments, prepared legal arguments, participated in discussions and met decision-makers, including ministers. A legal analysis informed submissions to Parliament, public discussion and an appeal to the President.

A public discussion brought together more than 60 participants, including civil society, experts and government representatives. A resolution and transcript were submitted to the Senate. Community mobilisation generated more than 800 individual appeals to the Senate, while 657 people joined an appeal to the President over four days.

We challenged barriers to participation and access to legislative information, including requests to join a Senate working group and obtain an updated comparative table of amendments. Legal work generated a documentary record of requests, official responses and procedural barriers. The subsequent appeal decisions are described separately.

The restrictive amendments were adopted despite these efforts. The campaign did not achieve its objective of preventing adoption. It nevertheless strengthened community coordination, documented objections and provided evidence and legal preparation for continued advocacy and litigation.

UN human rights mechanisms

Glotion prepared an alternative report for Kazakhstan’s periodic review by the UN Human Rights Committee and contributed to advocacy resulting in four recommendations specifically addressing sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI). We also submitted proposed issues to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; a SOGI-related question was included for Kazakhstan’s next reporting cycle.

We submitted two communications to UN special procedures concerning the proposed restrictions. UN mandate holders subsequently communicated with Kazakhstan and publicly expressed concern, increasing international scrutiny of the proposed measures.

Diplomatic and regional advocacy

We held separate briefings for international organisations and diplomatic missions, engaged international financial institutions, and maintained an advocacy mailing list of 80 recipients. Our materials supported statements and diplomatic engagement by international partners. We also met with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Glotion participated and spoke at the ILGA-Europe conference and undertook advocacy at the Warsaw Human Dimension Conference, including a side event. These platforms enabled us to present community concerns, share evidence and strengthen relationships with potential allies.

Community knowledge and support

Human rights and self advocacy

Glotion delivered three one-day training sessions on human rights, self-advocacy and advocacy, reaching 20 community representatives according to the project report. Participants developed two strategies for advancing LGBTQIA+ rights in Kazakhstan.

Eleven participants completed learning and feedback questionnaires. The project report recorded an increase from 27% to 90% in respondents correctly identifying the state's responsibility in the human rights violation scenario assessed. This indicates learning within a small respondent group; it is not a measure of change across all participants or the wider community.

Safety and regional solidarity

Two trainings for LGBTQIA+ clubs in Astana and Almaty addressed safety in the context of police raids. This work linked practical preparedness with experience gained through documentation and legal assistance.

Glotion also delivered a digital rights training for LGBTQIA+ activists from Central Asia and convened a discussion with activists from countries across the region on community solidarity. The activities created opportunities to exchange experience and discuss shared rights and safety challenges.

Boyau support for emerging activists

Through the Boyau programme, Glotion provided more than 20 consultations for emerging activists. The programme offered a dedicated channel for advice and support to people developing their involvement in activism. These consultations are reported separately from the 95 legal consultations; the two figures are not combined into a total number of people reached.

Health and social support

Glotion supported the launch of a shelter for LGBTQIA+ people. We report this as support to the initiative, rather than as a claim that Glotion independently established or operated the service.

We also conducted an assessment of sexual and reproductive health and rights in Kazakhstan. This expanded our work connecting human rights analysis with health-related concerns. No unverified participant numbers or service outcomes are attributed to either activity.

Communication and public engagement

The advocacy campaign combined publications, direct outreach and regular updates for international partners. The ECOM project report recorded 884,316 Instagram views and 114,921 accounts reached during its reporting period. These are digital engagement figures, not unique programme beneficiaries or measures of rights protection.

Across activities, attendance, consultations, digital reach and campaign signatures are reported as different measures. They are not added together because individuals and audiences may overlap.

Organisational development and follow up

A new strategy for 2025 to 2028

Glotion conducted strategic planning in 2025 and produced a new strategy for 2025-2028. The plan provides direction for protecting civil rights and freedoms and advancing the rights of LGBTQIA+ people. Priorities include strategic litigation, systematic responses to restrictive legislative initiatives, and the development of rights-based policies and practices.

The strategy focuses on freedom of association and peaceful assembly, access to information, freedom of expression and the right to health. It connects individual assistance with longer-term efforts to change institutional practices and policy.

Internal policies and operational systems

Under the WYDE-supported work, internal policies were approved in 2025 covering personal data processing, accounting and taxation, prevention of harassment, procurement, human resources and financial management. The work strengthened procedures for responsible resource management and safer organisational practice.

Glotion provided administrative, financial and legal support for project implementation. Project-specific accounting arrangements within the 1C system supported separate tracking of transactions. Fundraising and engagement with partners continued alongside programme delivery. The wider WYDE project ran from October 2025 to January 2026; this report distinguishes policies approved in 2025 from later project follow-up.

Challenges and lessons

The adoption of restrictive legislation demonstrated the limits of advocacy in an adverse political environment. Barriers to association and access to legislative information also constrained civic participation. These conditions increased the importance of legal documentation, community safety and sustained international relationships.

The police cases showed the value of combining individual representation, collective litigation and practical safety support. Across programmes, the year highlighted the need for clear internal procedures, realistic expectations about legal outcomes and continued follow-up after consultations, training and advocacy activities.

Subsequent developments in 2026

In Yara Tychina's case arising from the 2025 picket, the sanction imposed in 2026 did not involve administrative detention. Glotion's support also contributed to respectful treatment by police. This outcome is included as follow-up to work initiated in 2025, not as a 2025 court decision.

Appeals concerning access to the Senate working group and legislative information were heard on 18 and 25 February 2026. The courts upheld the return of the claims on procedural grounds without determining the underlying information and participation questions on their merits. These decisions informed further assessment of available remedies.

Reporting basis

This retrospective report draws on three project narrative reports and additional activity information and date confirmations provided by Glotion. Results extending into 2026 are identified separately. The document reports programme work and does not constitute an audited financial statement.